

Message Text

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CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

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SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: TURNHALLE UP-DATE

REFERENCE: A) PRETORIA 961, B) USUN 597 (NOTAL)

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. THE CURRENT SESSION OF THE TURNHALLE
CONVERENCE ON THE CONSTITUTIONAL FUTURE OF NAMIBIA IS NOW
INTO ITS SECOND WEEK OF TALKS. IN ITS FORMAL PROCEEDINGS
THE CONFERENCE HAS COMPLETED DISCUSSION OF THE REPORT AND
RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE DESIGNATED TO STUDY SOCIAL
AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND IT IS NOW CONSIDERING THE
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE WHICH INVESTIGATED EDUCATION MATTERS.
SOME DELEGATES HAVE STRONGLY CRITICIZED BOTH REPORTS.
CHIEF KAPUUNO'S CONSTITUTION AND MODIFIED PROPOSALS BY THE
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SOUTHERN CAUCUS HAVE BEEN PRESENTED INFORMALLY TO CON-

ERENCE PARTICIPANTS, INCREASING PRESSURE ON THE CONFERENCE TO MOVE ON TO ITS MOST CRUCIAL PHASE. END SUMMARY.

2. IN ADDITION TO APPROVING A SYSTEM OF EQUAL TENSIONS FOR ALL, THE TURNHALLE CONFERENCE HAS ACCEPTED RECOMMENDATIONS CALLING FOR A UNIFORM IDENTITY DOCUMENT FOR ALL INHABITANTS, A SUGGESTED MINIMUM WAGE FOR UNSKILLED WORKERS, AND THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK. ALTHOUGH ACCEPTED BY THE FULL ASSEMBLY, THESE RECOMMENDATIONS CAME IN FOR SOME CRITICISM. THE IDENTITY DOCUMENT PROPOSAL LED TO A WALK-OUT MARCH 5 BY TWO MEMBERS OF THE BASTER DELEGATION WHO OBJECTED TO THE FACT THAT THE DOCUMENT WOULD BEAR THE NOTATION "SOUTH AFRICAN CITIZEN". HANS DIERGAARD AND DAVID IZAACS TOLD REPORTERS THAT THEY DID NOT THINK A CONFERENCE WHICH SUPPOSEDLY WAS WORKING FOR THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE TERRITORY SHOULD RECOMMEND ISSUING A DOCUMENT WHICH LABELS THE INHABITANTS AS CITIZENS OF ANOTHER COUNTRY. THEY ALSO CRITICIZED CONFERENCE RULES OF PROCEDURE WHICH DID NOT ALLOW THEM TO DEBATE THEIR OBJECTIONS BEFORE ALL DELEGATES UNLESS THEY REFLECTED THE MAJORITY OPINION OF THEIR OWN DELEGATION.

3. A NUMBER OF DELEGATES ALSO EXPRESSED SERIOUS RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING A MINIMUM WAGE AND EQUAL PAY BECAUSE NO PROVISION IS MADE FOR MEASURES TO COMPEL EMPLOYEES TO COMPLY WITH THE PROPOSALS. THESE CALL FOR A MINIMUMWAGE OF R106 (APPROXIMATELY \$122) PER MONTH, OR ABOUT HALF THAT AMOUNT IN CASH IF ACCOMMODATIONS AND MEALS ARE PROVIDED, AND RECOMMENDS THAT ALL DISCRIMINATION IN WAGES BASED SOLELY ON COLOR BE REMOVED OVER THE NEXT TWELVE MONTHS FOR UNSKILLED WORKERS AND OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS FOR THE SKILLED.

4. IN LINE WITH ITS FORMAL AGENDA, THE CONFERENCE MARCH 10 BEGAN DISCUSSION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE WHICH INVESTIGATED EDUCATION MATTERS. THE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS REPORTEDLY HAVE EVOKED STRONG CRITICISM FROM A NUMBER OF BLACK DELEGATES, INCLUDING OWAMBOS, NAMAS, AND DAMARAS. THEY CHARGE THAT THE REPORT, IN EFFECT, WOULD MEAN A CONTINUATION OF APARTHEID IN EDUCATION BECAUSE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IT FAVORS RETENTION OF SEPARATE DEPARTMENTS FOR WHITE, COLORED AND BANTU EDUCATION. IN ADDITION, ALTHOUGH THE REPORT ACCEPTS COMPULSORY EDUCATION FOR ALL RACES AS AN IDEAL, IT DECLINES TO RECOMMEND IT SIMPLEMENTATION AT THIS STAGE.

5. PROPOSALS OF THE SOUTHERN CAUCUS (PARA 2 REF A) REPORTEDLY HAVE BEEN PRESENTED INFORMALLY TO FULL CON-

REFERENCE BY THE COLORED DELEGATION. SUPPORTERS OF WHAT WAS ORIGINALLY A SIX-POINT PLAN AGREED TO DROP A CALL FOR ESTABLISHMENT BY JUNE 30 OF A MULTIRACIAL INTERIM GOVERNMENT AFTER MEETING WITH WHITE DELEGATE DIRK MUDGE. ONE PARTICIPANT IN THE MEETING TOLD EMBOFF IN TELECON THAT MUDGE WAS "VERY UNHAPPY ABOUT THE WHOLE PLAN," BUT WAS SOMEWHAT MOLLIFIED WHEN THIS PART OF THE PLAN WAS DELETED. THE CONFERENCE HAS NOT YET DISCUSSED THE REMAINING POINTS WHICH INCLUDE ADMITTING INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS, ALLOWING POLITICAL PARTIES TO PARTICIPATE, ELIMINATING ALL DISCRIMINATORY LEGISLATION, AND IMMEDIATE DRAFTING OF A CONSTITUTION.

6. THE CONSTITUTION PROPOSALS OF HERERO LEADER CHIEF CLEMENS KAPUUNO (REF (B) REPORTEDLY NOW HAVE BEEN DISTRIBUTED TO MOST CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS AND KAPUUNO HAS DISCUSSED HIS PROPOSALS IN DETAIL WITH DELEGATION LEADERS. THE CONSTITUTION HAS NOT YET FORMALLY COME BEFORE THE CONFERENCE AND THERE HAS BEEN NO INDICATION OF WHEN THIS WILL HAPPEN. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS AND EMBASSY SOURCES IN WINDHOEK, HOWEVER, THE CONSTITUTION HAS GENERATED A GOOD DEAL OF EXCITEMENT AND IS A MAJOR TOPIC OF CONVERSATION OUTSIDE THE TURNHALLE. SWAPO SPOKESMAN DANIEL TJONGARERO SAID THE ORGANIZATION REJECTS THE ETHNIC BASIS OF KAPUUNO'S PROPOSALS BUT NEVERTHELESS WOULD CONTEST AND WIN AN ELECTION UNDER THE TERMS OF THE SUGGESTED CONSTITUTION.

7. COMMENT: UNDER INCREASING PRESSURE FROM EVEN QUITE MODERATE BLACK DELEGATES, THE TURNHALLE CONFERENCE MAY BE ABOUT TO COME TO GRIPS WITH THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS WHICH MUST BE RESOLVED IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE A SETTLEMENT IN NAMIBIA WHICH CAN BE GENERALLY ACCEPTED BOTH INTER-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY. ALTHOUGH SOME IMPORTANT POINTS OF DIVISION STILL EXIST AMONG DELEGATES PUSHING HARDEST FOR FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES IN THE TERRITORY'S PRESENT SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE (FOR EXAMPLE, KAPUUNO EVIDENTLY REMAINS INTRANSIGENT IN HIS STAND AGAINST SWAPO PARTICIPATION IN THE TALKS DESPITE A WILLINGNESS ON THE PART OF OTHER ELEMENTS IN THE SOUTHERN CAUCUS), A CONSENSUS APPARENTLY HAS DEVELOPED AMONG A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS THAT THE CONFERENCE MUST MOVE RAPIDLY TOWARDS CONSIDERATION OF A NEW POLITICAL DISPENSATION IN ADDITION TO SEEKING IMPROVEMENT IN SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS. UNTIL THE CONFERENCE FORMALLY CONSIDERS KAPUUNO'S CONSTITUTION AND THE SOUTHERN CAUCUS'S PROPOSALS, HOWEVER, IT IS DIFFICULT TO GAUGE HOW FAR, HOW FAST AND IN WHAT DIRECTION THE CONFERENCE IS PREPARED TO GO.

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